

**Alert | Health Emergency Preparedness Task Force:
Coronavirus Disease 2019**



April 17, 2020

Pennsylvania Legislature, Wolf Administration, Advance Additional COVID-19 Measures

With social distancing measures complicating everyday tasks that require in-person appearances, the Pennsylvania General Assembly and Health Secretary Rachel Levine both took measures this week to set rules and support remote businesses operating under the “new normal” circumstances of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19).

On April 15, 2020, Levine issued an expanded [order](#) regarding workplace safety, including requiring masks, hygiene, limiting meetings to 10 people, staggering shift start times, and a wide variety of other measures. The order takes effect Sunday, April 19, at 8 p.m.

The legislature passed, and has sent to Gov. Tom Wolf for signature, [Senate Bill 841](#), which allows for remote notarization of documents where the notary can identify the document, watch the signature, and record the interaction. Remote notarization can only occur where through “communication technology” the notary public has personal knowledge of the identity of the individual, satisfactory evidence of the individual’s identity, or is able to reasonably identify the individual by at least two different types of identification. The primary push for remote notarization was to aid automobile dealers and realtors, as in-person notary requirements were the final hurdle for many buying cars or homes in the age of social distancing.

S.B. 841 also includes provisions to allow local governments to conduct public meetings and business remotely. The measure holds in place normal requirements like notice, quorum, public participation and

the taking of minutes, but it allows hearings, meetings, proceedings or other business through an “Authorized Telecommunications Device.” Such devices include both teleconference and audioconference capabilities. This comes in response to the request of municipalities requesting express authorization to conduct business remotely during the State of Emergency.

Both S.B. 841 and Levine’s orders were dominated in the public media by [Senate Bill 613](#), under which the legislature attempted to replace the governor’s definition of “essential businesses” with one based on federal guidance. However, Wolf has announced since passage that he will veto S.B. 613.

For more information and updates on the developing COVID-19 situation, visit [GT’s Health Emergency Preparedness Task Force: Coronavirus Disease 2019](#).

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